

USDA NEWS

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USDA's 2001 Budget Calls For Cut Of \$5.2 Billion, Gain Of 2,346 Fed Staff Years

by Ron Hall, Office of Communications

"The theme of this budget is: not leaving rural America behind in the 21st century."

Secretary **Dan Glickman** made that point as he spoke at a press conference, held on February 7, to present USDA's proposed budget for FY 2001. He and Deputy Secretary **Richard Rominger** highlighted items of importance in the Department's proposed budget.

Glickman said that the budget includes initiatives to "keep rural America alive" so that residents—even those who are not involved in production agriculture—will still want to stay in rural America.

"Our goal is to help agriculture compete in the 21st century," he added.

Glickman also noted that USDA's FY 2001 budget proposes farm safety net improvements designed to enhance farm income support, increase environmental benefits, reform the crop insurance program, and expand economic opportunities for farms and rural areas.

In addition, the budget proposes enhanced conservation programs to include a boost in the President's Lands Legacy Initiative, as well as increased investments in nutrition programs, food safety, and water quality.

USDA's overall budget proposal for FY 2001 calls for a program level of \$100.2 billion and federal cash outlays of over \$64.9 billion. This represents a 4.9 percent decrease—by \$5.2 billion—from the currently estimated FY 2000 program level of \$105.4 billion, as well as an 8.6 percent decrease—by over \$6.1 billion—from the currently estimated FY 2000 cash outlay level of nearly \$71.1 billion.

Budget officials generally regard "program level" figures as the best method for describing the total scope of federal activities, including all services, loans, and grants in a budget. This is because "federal cash outlay" figures—

continued on pg. 2...



"It's a simple yet very powerful message, that 'Hunger does not discriminate'—or, in Spanish, that 'El hambre no discrimina'," affirms FNS's **Dawn Addison** (seated, 2nd from right). She and FNS colleagues **Alice Lockett**, **Pat Seward**, and **Barbara Hallman** (L to R) are reviewing one of the 24"x33" posters, printed in English and Spanish, which they recently created to promote good nutrition messages to participants in FNS's Food Stamp Program. It's part of an effort to put more emphasis on those messages. Note the story on page 4.—**PHOTO BY PAM FAITH**

USDA Is Highlighting 'Family-Friendly' Tools In The Workplace

To Be: The 'Employer Of Choice'

by Ron Hall, Office of Communications

"Family-Friendly." "Think Outside The Box." "Generation X."

According to **Marge Brining**, these three phrases represent some of the key motivators which has led to the establishment of a new program at USDA. It's called the "Family-Friendly Work/Life Program," and its purpose is to improve the work environment for USDA employees across the country.

Brining, a personnel management specialist in the Office of Human Resources Management, is the coordinator of the USDA-wide program, set up in August 1999.

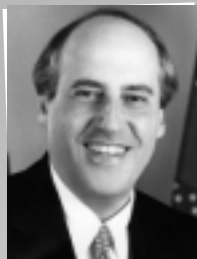
"Its underlying concept is pretty basic," Brining affirmed. "Officials at USDA realize the advantage of valuing their best resource at the Department: its work force."

"One way to protect that resource," she continued, "is to try to minimize outside pressures on that work force. Examples of pressures may include family matters and commutes. So if USDA can help out, it's in its enlightened self interest to do so, because it should lead to a less stressful—and more productive—work force, with less absenteeism."

Brining noted that a memorandum from President **Bill Clinton**, titled "New Tools to Help Parents Balance Work and Family," dated May 24, 1999, and sent to federal cabinet officials, directed the Office of Personnel Management to establish a governmentwide "Family Friendly Workplace Working Group."

continued on pg. 3...

Secretary Dan Glickman



USDA, as part of its new proposed budget, has put forward some new ideas to shore up the farm safety net and help farmers beyond what

is provided by existing programs.

The 1996 Farm Bill brought dramatic changes to this nation's farm programs, including sound provisions like greater emphasis on conservation and more planting flexibility. But in overhauling 60 years of national farm policy, it left behind an inadequate safety net, putting farmers at risk and giving them little to fall back on.

Rather than waiting to throw together another hasty, expensive emergency relief package later this year, we instead offer some new ideas, which can lay the ground-

work for new farm legislation in 2002. But let me be clear: for now, we are *not* proposing to rewrite the current Farm Bill—we want to enhance it.

Our plan calls for \$11 billion in new investments over the next two years to build a broader-based farm policy that includes more farmers and ranchers, is targeted to actual production, helps those most with the greatest need and treats our natural resources as valuable commodities.

The proposal has four major components.

First, it includes income support that is targeted and countercyclical. Payments would kick in when incomes drop, and they would go to farmers—not landlords—who are hardest hit.

Second, the proposal offers increased conservation assistance, including a program that would provide payments to farmers who undertake practices that help

curb erosion and protect water supplies from pesticide and nutrient runoff.

Third, the budget includes more risk management tools. We would extend the premium discount on crop insurance and give farmers the option to buy multi-year coverage, just as any other business can. We're also proposing a pilot livestock insurance program.

Fourth, we want to help farmers find new markets and get a larger share of each consumer dollar spent on food.

Taken together, I believe these ideas and proposals—on top of the many things we are already doing—are a strong foundation for a new farm safety net, which would fit within the context of a fiscally responsible balanced budget. We're setting the stage for a meaningful dialogue, the end of which will be a farm policy that farmers can count on, in good times and in bad. ♦

USDA's 2001 Budget...continued from pg. 1

while generally publicized more frequently—often don't clearly reflect the total magnitude of federal activities, since some loan program outlay figures are either excluded or presented in net present value terms.

USDA's budget proposes a federal staffing level for FY 2001 of 100,501 full-time equivalent positions, or federal staff years. This represents an increase of 2,346 federal staff years from the currently estimated FY 2000 federal staff year level of 98,155.

Agencies which reflect proposed increases in federal staff years include the Natural Resources Conservation Service (an increase of 1,843 federal staff years, to total 13,444 federal staff years), the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (247, to total 6,888), the Food and Nutrition Service (144, to total 1,861), the Rural Development mission area (114, to total 7,020), the Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration (49, to total 814), the Foreign Agricultural Service (20, to total 973), the Office of the General Counsel (20, to total 370), Departmental Administration (20, to total 753), the Office of the Chief Information Officer (12, to total 287), the Cooperative State Research, Education, & Extension Service (11, to total 451), the Economic Research Service (11, to total 522), the Forest Service (8, to total 35,619), the Office of Inspector General (7, to total 760), and the Office of the Chief Economist (6, to total 66).

Agencies with proposed decreases in federal staff years include the Food Safety and Inspection Service (a decrease of 162 federal staff years, to total 9,752 federal staff years), the National Agricultural Statistics Service (2, to total 1,135), and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (2, to total 1,173).

The permanent full-time non-federal county employees of the Farm Service Agency are projected to remain at 9,496 non-federal staff years, but FSA's temporary non-federal county employees are projected to decrease by 622, to total 1,270 non-federal staff years.

These federal staff year estimates are all subject to adjustments to reflect the final outcome of budget negotiations, including such unpredictable factors as the need for supplemental appropriations to cover natural disasters and other emergencies.

Highlights of USDA's FY 2001 budget proposal, thought to be of particular interest to employees, include:

■ Continuing the Department's field office modernization plan for its county-based agencies (FSA, NRCS, and RD). All USDA Service Center agency offices across the country are to have a 'common computing environment,' allowing efficient e-mail, records transfer, and streamlined business processes for better customer service; \$75 million is requested for its continued implementation.

■ Providing an increase of \$1 million and

10 staff years for the Department's alternative dispute resolution programs to help resolve equal employment opportunity complaints at an early stage.

■ Increasing programs of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization by \$500,000 to support educational and technical assistance for small and disadvantaged and small, women-owned businesses in rural areas. The intent is to increase returns through value-added processing of crops, developing new agriculturally oriented markets, and e-commerce.

■ Providing nearly \$1.3 billion in direct and guaranteed business and industry loans from the Rural Business-Cooperative Service to help create or save 40,000 more jobs in rural communities.

■ Proposing an increase in funding by nearly one-third, to total \$561 million, for USDA programs in the governmentwide Invasive Species Initiative, including funds for a new national early warning system to help prevent, detect, and rapidly eradicate recently introduced invasive plant, insect, and animal species such as the Asian longhorned beetle, the zebra mussel, and leafy spurge.

■ Providing an increase of \$29 million, to total over \$165 million, for USDA programs to support the President's Food Safety Initiative.

USDA's proposed budget for FY 2001 was transmitted to Congress earlier on the same day as the Department's press conference. ♦

When It Comes To 'Direct Deposit,' We're At 96 Percent, And Climbing

Talk about nearly across-the-board, unanimous participation: as of the last day of the previous millennium—or, to be more traditional, as of December 31, 1999—96 percent of USDA employees were receiving their USDA salary payments via 'electronic funds transfer.'

According to **Dale Theurer**, the asset management team leader in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, this means that nearly all employees were receiving their salary through an electronic 'Direct Deposit' to their designated bank, credit union, or other financial institution. He said this figure compares with 92 percent employee participation at the end of calendar year 1998.

Theurer acknowledged that participation in electronic funds transfer isn't exactly voluntary. In fact, the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 required that most federal payments—with the exception of tax refunds—must be made by electronic funds

Administrative



transfer, effective January 1999.

"But the law also allowed some room for exceptions in the case of hardship," he pointed out. "In fact, the law advised that if receiving a federal payment electronically, instead of through a paper check, would cause that recipient a financial hardship—to include such reasons as geography, lack of a bank account, language, literacy barrier, or physical or mental disability—then that person could qualify for a 'hardship waiver' established by the U.S. Treasury Department. The individual could then be permitted to receive his/her federal payment by check."

OCFO staff accountant **Mel Robinson** said that Treasury Department officials wanted to strike the right balance between accomplishing the significant cost savings from Direct Deposit while still protecting the recipients from a possible hardship or burden, and not forcing them into choices that were not right for them.

"Direct Deposit of your USDA salary has become increasingly popular," he said. "It's safer and more secure, it costs the taxpayer less in processing expenses, and, for most, it's more convenient than paper checks."

In addition, Theurer noted that the date that an employee's pay could be electronically credited to his/her account has speeded up over the years. The January-February 1994 issue of the **USDA News** carried a story about that accelerated posting.

"In our fast-paced, rush rush, hectic lives these days—both in urban and rural America," he affirmed, "receiving our USDA salary payments through Direct Deposit is one way we can simplify our lives a little bit." ♦

'Family-Friendly'...continued from pg. 1

Brining represents USDA on that group.

In turn, last August the Department created its own in-house Family-Friendly Work/Life Working Group, composed of representatives from mission areas or program agencies, from both headquarters and field offices. "That group," she said, "is designed to be a forum for sharing information about collective initiatives, networking, and brainstorming about solutions to balance the challenges between an employee's work life and home life."

Many of the initiatives which the group is discussing are not new to the Department. "But what *is* new," Brining advised, "is that, with the establishment of both a Family-Friendly Work/Life coordinator, plus a working group on that same subject, USDA ensures that there is equitability in the way these various family-friendly initiatives are administered—throughout the Department—for those agencies which opt to adopt any of them."

And just what type of initiatives are we talking about here? Brining noted that they include:

❶ permitting 'telecommuting,' also called 'work at home,' 'teleworking,' and 'flexiplace,' which may include working at one's residence during predesignated days of the week or month or periodically commuting to a 'satellite office'—equipped with computers and other basic office equipment—in lieu of traveling all the way to one's normal office. The July 1991 issue of the **USDA News** carried a

story on USDA employees who telecommute.

❷ authorizing 'family-friendly leave' to take care of family members—with a more expansive definition of the term 'family'—as well as for the purpose of adoption. The March-April 1999 issue of the **USDA News** carried a story on the newly created federal leave slip which, according to OHRM personnel management specialist **Liz Daly**, is to be used by federal employees to apply for such leave.

❸ providing workshops and/or other forms of advice to help employees who are 'caregivers'—helpers of elderly family members who can no longer survive totally on their own. The November 1989 **USDA News** carried a story about USDA's eldercare workshops and caregivers support group.

❹ providing child care facilities on-site at USDA offices around the country. The June-July 1998 **USDA News** carried a response to an employee "Letter to the Secretary" which outlined how USDA employees may request space in their office buildings for such a facility.

❺ authorizing administrative leave for employees to participate in certain predesignated and preapproved forms of 'Adopt-A-School' volunteerism. The July-August 1999 issue of the **USDA News** carried a story about how the Department is reemphasizing its 'Adopt-A-School' program.

❻ providing employees the option to participate in some form of a monetary 'transit incentive' program, to encourage employees

to use qualifying forms of public transportation to commute to and from their USDA workplace. The September 1999 **USDA News** carried a story on that program.

❼ setting up 'Nursing Mothers Rooms' at USDA offices, to provide USDA employees, who are nursing mothers, a private place where they can quickly, hygienically, and comfortably pump their breast milk, and then store it, so they can provide it later to their babies, away from the office. "Contrary to a common misconception," Brining pointed out, "the nursing mothers rooms are not intended to serve as a place for moms to nurse their new babies on-site at USDA." The January-February 1998 **USDA News** carried a story about nursing mothers rooms located at USDA headquarters and field offices.

"These creative, 'family-friendly' tools," affirmed Brining, "are helping USDA managers 'think outside the box' and create options to entice current and prospective employees."

"And these tools are becoming even more critical as members of 'Generation X' enter the work force, who'll generally want—and expect—more flexibility, independence, and options in their career development."

"And if they don't get them," she observed, "chances are the 'Gen X'ers' may simply leave USDA and join the private sector—or maybe not even join us at USDA in the first place."

"These tools should help USDA be the 'employer of choice' in the new millennium." ♦



Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services

A Unique Angle To Outreach

USDA has been placing even greater emphasis of late on outreach efforts to customers in historically underserved communities. But employees in northeastern Illinois have launched an outreach initiative that they feel has a unique angle to it.

Employees at the USDA Service Center in Kankakee County, Ill., have initiated a special outreach project with small acreage and/or limited resource farmers in that county's Pembroke Township which involves hands-on educational farming demonstrations.

What makes it unique, they feel, is in the number of local agencies and organizations that are participating in the hands-on demonstrations.

"From USDA, we have participation from the Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rural Development, and the cooperative extension personnel from the University of Illinois," noted **Merrill Marxman**, FSA county executive director for Kankakee County and co-coordinator of this particular outreach initiative.

"But we also have participation from a multitude of groups in the private sector locally, including a farm equipment company, representatives from farm advocacy groups, local soil and water conservation district personnel, community social service groups, and individual farmers," added **Bob Gotkowski**, an NRCS district conservationist in Kankakee County and Marxman's co-coordinator.

"I'm pretty sure that there's not another rural outreach project out there, in USDA, that touches base with all these types of groups at the same time," said **Stephen**

Employees
make these things...

HAPPEN!

Scates, FSA state executive director for Illinois, based in Springfield.

"We also think our effort is unique because we're reaching out to the row crop producer, the truck farmer, and the livestock producer, all at the same time," affirmed Marxman.

Gotkowski said that the workshops—which receive financial assistance from NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a conservation education program—have covered such topics as how to write grant applications, specialty mushroom growing, financial recordkeeping, managing produce after harvest, weed control, drip irrigation, and free-range poultry. They are led by local USDA personnel, local farm business representatives, and/or local farmers themselves.

"Our intent," Marxman emphasized, "is to help our local small acreage and/or limited resource farmers sharpen their skills, broaden their horizons, increase their opportunities, employ conservation and environmentally sound farming practices, and become more self-sufficient." He said that over 92 percent of the population of Pembroke Township is black and more than 50 percent of the township's population lives at or below the poverty line, and the area's sandy soil is generally of marginal quality for crop production.

Marxman and Gotkowski worked with **Basu**, a local organic farmer who uses one name to reflect his African heritage, who offered the use of his 50-acre farm to USDA to use as a demonstration plot to practice a number of the farming techniques being described in the hands-on demonstrations.

"For instance," Gotkowski noted, "Basu was the first to use conservation methods to protect topsoil by employing wind breaks and contour buffer zones around his field—just as they had been discussed in an earlier outreach demonstration."

"We've got more on-farm demonstrations

planned for this summer," Marxman observed. "And we'll continue this outreach initiative which we think is welcomed as a helpful—and popular—tool."

—**RON HALL**



Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services

The Food Stamp/Nutrition Link

"Some people still think that food stamps simply help people avoid hunger. However, food stamps play a valuable role in promoting good nutrition and good health."

Barbara Hallman was describing the renewed emphasis that the Department is placing on the link between food stamps and good nutrition. Hallman, chief of the State Administration Branch with the Food and Nutrition Service's Food Stamp Program, is head of an FNS team working to promote good nutrition messages to food stamp participants.

"We're working to reframe the Food Stamp Program—which FNS administers—toward nutrition," added **Alice Lockett**, an FNS nutritionist and part of the team. "It just makes sense to emphasize this, as we reach out to low income Americans. And it's part of our larger effort to reinforce the nutrition aspects of *all* our FNS nutrition assistance programs."

"Our public education initiative lets eligible individuals and families know that the Food Stamp Program can help them make ends meet—and also improve their nutrition," noted FNS program education coordinator **Pat Seward**.

She pointed out that FNS is now focusing on the three groups most under-represented among food stamp recipients: the working poor, the elderly, and legal immigrants.

Secretary **Dan Glickman** launched the Food Stamp Program's education initiative to focus on those three groups with a formal kickoff in Baltimore last August. That campaign includes the use of posters, flyers, and brochures. All materials are printed in English and Spanish.

"We've incorporated compelling images of representatives of those three groups," Seward affirmed. "The visuals and the messages help us publicize food stamps and also stress the value of using food stamps for good nutrition and good health."

She said that the educational materials are available on FNS's web site, on the USDA



NRCS's **Bob Gotkowski** (left) and FSA's **Merrill Marxman** (center) help local Kankakee County organic farmer **Basu** to load seed on his planter so he can plant organic corn on a demonstration plot on his 50-acre farm.

home page, at www.fns.usda.gov

FNS program analyst **Dawn Addison** noted that FNS has established a toll-free number, 1-800-221-5689, to help people learn more about food stamps and determine if they are eligible.

Lockett said that, to help publicize the nutritional message regarding food stamps, FNS printed the USDA Food Guide Pyramid on its promotional literature for the Food Stamp Program. "The Food Guide Pyramid," she explained, "represents the government's guide to a healthy diet."

The Pyramid also appears on the back covers of the food stamp paper coupon books at the \$2 level. A 'good nutrition' message appears on the food stamp paper coupon books at all denomination levels.

Charlotte Duncan, an FNS food stamp program nutritionist with the agency's Southeast Region in Atlanta, worked with regional public affairs specialist **Steve Watson** to develop a public service announcement which promoted the nutritional benefits of the food stamp program. "That PSA began running on radio stations in Georgia in December, and, to date, it's still airing," Duncan said.

Additional activities are underway across the country to educate the public about the nutritional benefits of the Food Stamp Program. For instance, **Gilda Karu**, acting food stamp program director for FNS's Midwest Region in Chicago, worked with regional public affairs specialist **Diana Pihos** to 'spread the word' by working with news media outlets which target racial or ethnic minorities.

"Translating good nutrition messages into the native languages of groups assures that they identify with those messages," Karu said. "The local ethnic community can also serve as a powerful agent to assist in reaching people with minimal English language skills."

"There are 17.6 million people who rely on food stamps," pointed out **Abigail Nichols**, director of the Food Stamp Program's Program Accountability Division. "So we want to remind them that healthy eating habits are the basis for good health."

"And for the millions of people who are eligible—but are not participating—in the Food Stamp Program, we're working hard to convey the message that the Food Stamp Program is a nutrition program that can help them have better diets, while providing the resources to afford them."

—**RON HALL**



Marketing and Regulatory Programs

Before Leaving For Abroad...

So, now that springtime is just around the corner—*And That Flippin' 'Corner' Had Better Arrive Here Pretty Quick!*—you may be planning that long-awaited spring vacation to 'de Islands, mon' or to some other exotic port of call.

Have a great time—and be sure to send lots of postcards to your envious USDA friends and colleagues back at the office. But before you take off, you might want to check out a new web site created by specialists in the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. It's designed to explain key government regulations pertaining to travel and offer tips for safe, sane overseas travel—with an emphasis on travel matters pertaining to agriculture.

According to **Sue McAuley**, an APHIS public affairs specialist who helped to develop the APHIS web site, that site—located on the USDA home page—provides 'one-stop-shopping' for international travelers. "Our intent," she advised, "was to offer a place on the Internet where someone could go to find out about which agricultural products—and also which pets, for that matter—they can and can't bring into the U.S."

That web site, which was completed and made accessible in December, is www.aphis.usda.gov/travel

Jim Smith, director of port operations with APHIS's Plant Protection and Quarantine staff, noted that APHIS has plant protection and quarantine officers and technicians assigned to virtually all the ports of entry—including international airports and international seaports—around the United States. "Their job," he explained, "is to prevent the introduction of harmful and invasive plant and animal pests and diseases, such as noxious weeds, insects, fungi, and parasites, into the U.S."

"Those pests and diseases could threaten the abundance and variety of our U.S. food supply—as well as damage our natural resources."

"Plus," Smith added, "pests and diseases cost American taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars for higher priced food and fiber products, as well as increase the cost associated with control and eradication programs."

APHIS's plant protection and quarantine staffers inspect passenger baggage, mail, airline and ship stores or food supplies, vehic-

les, and cargo in the federal inspection services areas at U.S. ports of entry. Smith pointed out that in Hawaii and Puerto Rico, plus in some parts of Canada and some Caribbean countries, passengers may undergo a predeparture inspection before leaving for the U.S. mainland.

"Our inspectors," he explained, "look for prohibited agricultural products and associated materials that could serve as pathways for introduction of invasive pests into this country."

"Those products are forbidden entry into the U.S. or are allowed in here only under very specific conditions," he added. "In fact, every year, our plant protection and quarantine port personnel intercept tons of agricultural contraband and associated material that could contain microscopic plant and animal pests and diseases."

"With all that in mind," Smith continued, "if international travelers were to access our web site before departing, they might be able to avoid a number of agriculturally-related travel problems before arriving in the U.S. mainland."

The options on APHIS's travel web site include "Traveling to the United States," "Traveling with Your Pets," "Safeguarding American Agriculture," "Bringing Agricultural Products into the United States," and "The Beagle Brigade."

"For instance," McAuley noted, "in the 'Traveling to the United States' section, we point out that APHIS requires all travelers entering the U.S. from a foreign country to declare all fruits, vegetables, plants and plant products, meat and meat products, and animals, birds, and eggs."

"Our web site offers details on how to make that declaration—and it also advises that failure to declare any such items may result in delays and fines of up to \$1,000."

McAuley said that the web site's "Bringing Agricultural Products into the United States" section contains some guidance written in Spanish. It also includes a category titled "Why Are You Taking My...?"

"This entry," she said, "is designed to explain why such items as fruits, veggies, and animals—as well as such items as hunting trophies, live snails, and even packing materials—are prohibited entry into this country, and what havoc such items have wreaked in the past when they did slip through."

"So the next time you travel abroad, fly safe, eat hearty, and veg out—but look at our APHIS web site before departing, so you can eliminate at least one set of hassles when you return."

—**ANNA CHERRY**



Paul Fiddick was sworn in as the assistant secretary for administration. He succeeded **Wardell Townsend**, who held that position from May 1993 until March 1997, when he

left to establish Townsend Dantai, a government relations and trade consulting firm based in Silver Spring, Md. as well as continue course work on a Ph.D. degree in organizational psychology. [Then] Natural Resources Conservation Service Associate Chief **Pearlie Reed** served as acting assistant secretary for administration from February 1997 until he was named chief of NRCS in March 1998. Chief Financial Officer **Sally Thompson** served as acting assistant secretary for administration from January 1999 until November 1999.

Fiddick has 28 years of professional experience in the communications and technology industries. Before joining USDA, he worked as a management consultant to firms developing Internet businesses. This included serving from November 1998 until his recent appointment as interim president and vice chairman of RadioWave.com, Inc.—which is the Internet subsidiary of Motorola—in its Dallas office. In 1987 he co-founded the Dallas-based Heritage Media Corporation and was president of its 24-station radio group, which covered seven major media markets located around the country. Heritage Media was subsequently acquired by The News Corporation, Ltd. in August 1997 in a \$1.5 billion merger transaction. The radio group was spun off in March 1998 to Sinclair Communications for \$340 million.

From 1986-87 Fiddick served as president of the radio group of the predecessor to Heritage Media—Heritage Communications, Inc.—in its Des Moines office. He served as president of the Radio Division of Multimedia, Inc., based in Cincinnati, from 1982-86, after having served as senior vice president of its Radio Division, based in Milwaukee, in 1981. From 1972-81 he worked as an account executive, sales marketing director, and then general manager at WEZW-FM in Milwaukee. He also taught communications courses part-time at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee from 1978-81. He began his career at KCMO-AM/FM in Kansas City, Mo., as an account executive in 1971.

Fiddick served on the board of directors of the Radio Advertising Bureau, a national industry trade association, from 1983-99, including serving as its chair from 1993-94. He also

Editor's Roundup

USDA people in the news

served on the board of directors of the National Association of Broadcasters from 1994-98.

A native of Cameron, Mo., Fiddick holds a bachelor of journalism degree from the University of Missouri. ♦



Jim Kearney was named as administrator of the Rural Housing Service. He succeeded **Jan Shadburn**, who held that position from August 1997 until April 1999, when he re-

turned to his previously held position as the Rural Development mission area's state director in Florida, based in Gainesville. Associate Administrator **Eileen Fitzgerald** served as acting administrator in the interim.

From January 1999 until his recent appointment Kearney served as the associate administrator for operations and management in the Farm Service Agency. The July-August 1999 issue of the **USDA News** carried his complete biographical sketch, following his selection to that position. ♦



Kenneth M. Ackerman was selected as the assistant administrator for program accounting and regulatory analysis in the Rural Utilities Service. He succeeded **Bobbie Purcell**,

who served in that position from November 1997 until October 1998, when she was selected as the assistant administrator for telecommunications in RUS.

Before joining USDA, from December 1996 until his selection Ackerman served as chief of the Audits Branch at the Federal Communications Commission. From 1990-96 he was chief of the Accounting Systems Branch at FCC. He worked as a systems accountant in that Branch from 1982-90. During 1982 he was an auditor in the Office of Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Transportation. He worked as an accountant at the [then] Civil Aeronautics Board from 1977-82.

A native of Baltimore, Ackerman holds a B.S. degree in accounting from Towson University in Towson, Md. He is a certified public accountant in Maryland. ♦



Jan Poling was selected as the associate general counsel for natural resources in the Office of the General Counsel. She succeeded **Jim Perry**, who served in that position

from October 1995 until October 1998, when he retired following over 31 years of federal service.

From 1992 until her recent selection Poling served as the deputy assistant general counsel/legislative counsel in OCC's Natural Resources Division, concentrating on legal issues related to Forest Service programs. She worked as an attorney in the Congressional and Legislative Affairs Office at the U.S. Department of the Interior from 1988-92, after having worked as an attorney in the Office of the Solicitor at the Interior Department from 1984-88.

From 1981-84 Poling was an assistant attorney general for the state of Alabama, based in Montgomery, where she concentrated on appellate litigation and represented various state boards and agencies.

A native of Birmingham, Ala., Poling holds a B.S. degree in English education from Auburn University in Auburn, Ala., and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Alabama School of Law. ♦



Rick Cables was selected as the regional forester for the Forest Service's Alaska Region, based in Juneau. He succeeded **Phil Janik**, who served in that position from May

1994 until May 1998, and who is now the Forest Service's Chief Operating Officer. **Jim Caplan**, deputy regional forester for natural resources for the Alaska Region, served as acting regional forester in the interim.

From October 1995 until his selection, Cables was based in Pueblo, Colo., as the forest supervisor for the Pike and San Isabel National Forests and the Comanche National Grasslands, all in Colorado, as well as the Cimarron National Grasslands in Kansas. He was based in Laconia, N.H., as the forest supervisor for the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire and Maine from

1990-95. From 1987-89 he worked as a natural resources staff specialist at FS's headquarters office in Washington, DC.

Cables was a district forest ranger based in Heber, Ariz., on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests from 1985-87. From 1982-85 he worked as an assistant district ranger in Questa, N.M., on the Carson National Forest, after having worked from 1980-82 as an assistant district ranger in Clifton, Ariz., on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. He was a silviculturist in Heber, Ariz., on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests from 1977-80, after having worked as a forester in Grants, N.M., on the Cibola National Forest in 1977. He began his career with FS in 1976 as a forestry technician in Jacob Lake, Ariz., on the Kaibab National Forest.

A native of Pueblo, Colo., Cables holds a B.S. degree in forestry from Northern Arizona University, and is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pa. ♦



For most USDA employees located at headquarters and field locations and at ag posts overseas, this year's annual Combined Federal Campaign for charitable contributions ended in December.

But for **Kamala Tripathi**, it's a long-term venture.

That's because Tripathi, a toxicologist with the Food Safety and Inspection Service, established one of the charitable organizations listed in the CFC catalogue of over 2,800 organizations that are recipients of contributions from the annual solicitation.

"To my knowledge," he said, "I'm the only employee in USDA's current work force who has created an organization that is listed in the CFC catalogue."

The non-profit organization he founded, called the "Nagina Women's Institute of Health and Education," is based on his memories of growing up in the Suriyawan area of northern India, located between New Delhi and Calcutta. "I remember a poor area, suffering from disease and malnutrition, with a very low literacy rate, and lacking in educational and medical facilities or even basic information on family planning," he recounted. "But I also recall that conditions were even worse for women than for men, at least partly because of practices based on culture, tradition, and illiteracy."

"In fact," he added, "there is a paragraph in

our brochure that states 'While women in the developed countries today measure sex discrimination by comparative pay scales and seats in the corporate boardroom, women in the Third World measure discrimination by poverty levels, lack of opportunity, and mortality rates.'"

"So, even though I had left my relatives and moved away from that area over 36 years ago, I decided to try improving conditions where my roots were."

Tripathi concluded that the most effective approach would be to create a non-profit, tax-exempt foundation. He envisioned a three-pronged thrust of activity, concentrating on eye care, health, and educational needs of all residents, but with a concentration on women and children of the Suriyawan area.

Tripathi said it took about a year for him to take care of all the administrative requirements, work with attorneys, set up a board of directors, and pay various levels of fees, including initial fees, attorneys fees, and filing fees in Virginia, home base of the foundation. "I initially paid all of those fees out of my pocket," he recounted. "But now the foundation pays the required fees."

As a next step he contacted the "Local Charities of America," which is based near San Francisco. Officials with that organization helped him to get on the Combined Federal Campaign's list of organizations which can be recipients of CFC contributions. "I had to ensure my foundation met CFC's qualifications, such as being registered with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service as a non-profit, tax exempt foundation, establish a board of directors, and submit required annual forms to the IRS," he explained. "And I'm required to get recertified by CFC each year, in order to stay on CFC's list."

Tripathi said that his foundation has been listed in CFC's catalogue for the last three years. Two years ago during CFC's annual fall activities at USDA's headquarters in Washington, DC, he set up a booth in the Patio of USDA's Whitten Building and handed out brochures about his foundation. "I think it re-

sulted in about 45 to 50 contributions that year," he said.

And where are all these tax-exempt contributions, from CFC and other sources, going? Tripathi said that, up to this point, they have been used for establishing an on-site eye care center that offers free cataract operations and free eyeglasses to all residents of that area.

"But last October," he said, "the local Indian village government gave the foundation ten acres of land on which to build a hospital, a health center, an educational center, and a library for all citizens, but with a concentration on women and children in the area, and groundbreaking is scheduled for this summer."

"So this will help to make women in that area full-fledged citizens with equal rights." ♦

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Letters

EDITOR'S NOTE: This "Letters" section is an opportunity for USDA employees to communicate with Sec. **Dan Glickman**, through questions or comments, on matters that would be appropriate and of general interest to USDA employees across the country. He invites employees to use this particular forum in the **USDA News** to communicate with him, by using the following mailing address: "Letters," Sec. Dan Glickman, USDA, STOP #0190, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250.



*If the posters and flyers surrounding FNS's **Pat Seward** could talk to her, they would be uttering messages—both in English and Spanish—that emphasize the value of using USDA food stamps to promote good nutrition. Those materials, which Seward helped to develop, are part of FNS's recent public education initiative to let eligible persons know that FNS's Food Stamp Program can help them make ends meet—and also improve their nutrition. Note the story on page 4.—**PHOTO BY PAM FAITH***



HELP US FIND

Jesus Aristeo Ponce

Missing: 10-31-99

From: San Antonio, TX

D.O.B. 12-10-90

Sex: Male

Hair: Black

Eyes: Brown

Height: 4 ft. 6 in.

Weight: 85 lbs.

If you have information, please call

1-800-843-5678

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

USDA-Sponsored Calendar Highlights

◆ **March 6-8**

*CYFAR (Children, Youth,
& Families At Risk) 2000 Conference*
Charlotte, N.C.

(202) 720-5075 or 1-800-877-8339 (TTY)

◆ **Month of March**

Women's History Month

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